



Paul Stacey
Bureau of Water Protection
Department of Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

February 4th, 2010
BUREAU OF WATER PROTECTION AND LAND REUSE
OFFICE OF THE BUREAU CHIEF

FEB 05 2010

Dear Mr. Stacey,

I would like to provide testimony in regards to proposed Streamflow Regulations being considered by the DEP. I am Co-Chair of the New Haven Environmental Justice Network, an unincorporated non-profit organization that promotes environmental justice through outreach and activism. We believe the proposed graded classification of rivers unfairly burdens lower-income communities as they are most likely to be located around lowest quality rivers. I specifically refer to Class 4 rivers in which "there is no need to sustain aquatic life and only a miniscule flow is required." It is important to remember that these rivers became degraded primarily because of the activities of the same institutions that are asking for the inclusion of a Class 4 grade.

This is an Environmental Justice issue as proposed Class 4 "heavily impacted" or "sacrificial" rivers are traditionally located in poorer urban areas. For example, the neighborhood of Fair Haven, home to the majority of the City of New Haven's Hispanic immigrant population, lies on the Western shore of the Quinnipiac River. The river is an intricate part of life for many of Fair Haven's recreational (and perhaps subsistence) fishers. There is also a growing interest on the part of community groups, such as the Chatham Square Neighbors Association, to take a bigger role in river stewardship. This particular effort would engage residents of Quinnipiac Terrace, a large housing project overlooking the river, in educational programs around preserving the Quinnipiac. The water itself is also a great source of recreational space for many canoeists and kayakers. On the Eastern Shore, the New Haven Land Trust offers biological exploration programs at their newly acquired Grannis Island Preserve, often making reference to aquatic life.

To deem the Quinnipiac River a Class 4 river, as the current proposed Streamflow Regulations dictate, would be to effectively sacrifice any opportunity for traditionally disenfranchised populations to enjoy the environmental benefits and educational opportunities the Quinnipiac affords. We urge you to take this matter into serious consideration and to eliminate Class 4 denomination in Streamflow regulations.

Thank You,

Nathalie Alegre
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